



# Working with Contracts & Contractors

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BULLETIN**

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*If there is a single commonality within municipal forestry today, it is the attempt to 'do more with less.' As city officials try their best to maintain or expand the trees that provide so many benefits in our communities, contracting almost always comes up as one of the ways to do this. A look at contracts and effective contracting is important both in urban forestry and for homeowners.*

Contracting in urban forestry has been around since the days when John Davey and Francis Bartlett first hung out their shingles to provide commercial tree care in America. Contracting is part of every company, most municipalities and is – or should be – involved anytime a homeowner needs work done on trees by someone outside the family.

In most cases, the agreement between parties goes smoothly and provides mutual satisfaction. But sometimes things go very wrong. In other cases, tax payers' dollars could be saved through contracting instead of using in-house personnel, but if done without careful analysis, it may be the other way around.

Contracting for arboricultural services is the most common use of 'outside' help in urban forestry or home tree care. However, there is also assistance available for the broader management needs of urban forestry. For example, in Michigan, J. H. Hart Urban Forestry offers not only traditional procedures such as fertilizing, pruning, removals and stump grinding, but company personnel also serve as the urban foresters for the cities of Birmingham, Troy, Rochester Hills, Lathrup Village, and Royal Oak; and for the Village of Beverly Hills.

In this bulletin, we take a look at some of the ways contracting is being used and some considerations that can make this a successful part of tree stewardship.



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